

# COMBINED GUIDANCE MEMORANDUM #1 AND #2:



## *Stakeholder Participation and Outreach Plan*

To: Terry Winters, Nassau County OEM  
From: Anna Foley, URS  
Judith Fischer, Omni Consulting  
Date: October 19, 2005  
Re: Nassau County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Planning Effort

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**The Project:** A county-wide, multi-jurisdictional hazard mitigation plan to identify the risks of specific natural disasters occurring in Nassau County and to identify where improvements in infrastructure need to be made to reduce potential impacts. The plan will be developed to comply with the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 and its implementing regulations.

**The Issue:** To serve Nassau County's diverse and concentrated population, **participation of the public and other stakeholders in the hazard mitigation planning process is essential** to provide local information to the planners; to identify potential risks and impacts; and to help develop proposed projects to mitigate those impacts. It is also required if the final plan is to meet FEMA requirements. The plan will therefore represent the collective efforts of citizens, elected and appointed government officials, business leaders, volunteers of non-profit organizations, and other stakeholders.

**Memo Purpose:** This Combined Memorandum: Stakeholder Participation and Outreach Plan has been prepared by URS and Omni Consulting in accordance with our contract scope of work to provide the Planning Group (Nassau County and its participating jurisdictions) with:

- an **overview of the structure of the Planning Group** and basic roles;
- a **summary of the regulations** as they relate to participation of the public and other stakeholders during plan development and plan maintenance; and
- **suggestions for meeting the terms of these regulations.**

This combined memorandum provides a summary of key information presented in the regulations and the FEMA How-To Guides, and is intended to serve as a supplement – not as a replacement – to the FEMA documents. URS strongly suggests that Planning Group members make every effort to familiarize themselves with applicable FEMA regulations and mitigation planning guidance.

**Memo Structure:** Section 1 – The Planning Team provides an overview of the structure of the planning group, basic roles of each component, and a summary of jurisdictions that have expressed interest in participating to-date. It also speaks to the role of contractors in the plan development process.

Section 2 – Outreach Plan provides options for reaching out to the public and other stakeholders during the plan development process (before the plan is adopted) and the plan maintenance process (the review cycle after the plan is adopted). It is divided into two parts:

- Part A – Outreach Plan: Plan Development Process
- Part B – Outreach Plan: Plan Maintenance Process

**Keep In Mind:** URS Corporation, as the consulting company, is able to provide the Planning Group with guidance on potential means to satisfy the FEMA requirements for participation of the public and other stakeholders in the plan development and plan maintenance procedures. Nevertheless, **it is the members of the Planning Group (Nassau County and its participating jurisdictions) who are ultimately responsible for selecting activities that they feel are most appropriate for their respective communities, carrying out these activities, and providing URS with activity summaries to be incorporated into the plan.**

**Action Items:** Action items are discussed further throughout this memorandum. They are presented in summary here.

The Draft Plan is scheduled for completion in early February 2006. To allow URS sufficient time to draft appropriate plan sections, the Planning Group must:

- Provide Outreach Logs (completed by each participating jurisdiction) documenting outreach activities to the public and other stakeholders no later than January 15, 2006.
- Provide their selected approach for public and other stakeholder participation in plan maintenance no later than January 15, 2006.

## *Section 1 – The Planning Team*

### **Nassau County Hazard Mitigation Planning Group**

The Nassau County Multi-Jurisdictional Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan is being developed by the **Nassau County Hazard Mitigation Planning Group (the “Planning Group”)**, with support from an outside consulting firm (URS Corporation, “URS”). The efforts of the Planning Group are headed by the Nassau County Office of Emergency Management's Hazard Mitigation Coordinator. The Plan will represent the collective efforts of citizens, elected and appointed government officials, business leaders, volunteers of non-profit organizations, and other stakeholders.

Nassau County is divided into three towns (Hempstead, North Hempstead, and Oyster Bay) and two cities (Long Beach and Glen Cove). Within these boundaries lie 64 incorporated villages. The County has reached out to all of its cities, towns, and villages in 2004 and again in 2005 to invite each jurisdiction to join the county-wide multi-jurisdictional hazard mitigation planning process. To date, the following positive responses have been received:

#### County:

- Nassau County is a participating jurisdiction and will be heading-up the planning process.

#### Towns:

- Town of Hempstead and Town of North Hempstead will be participating jurisdictions.
- Town of Oyster Bay has an approved plan in place and will be participating in an advisory capacity.

#### Cities:

- City of Glen Cove will be a participating jurisdiction.

#### Villages:

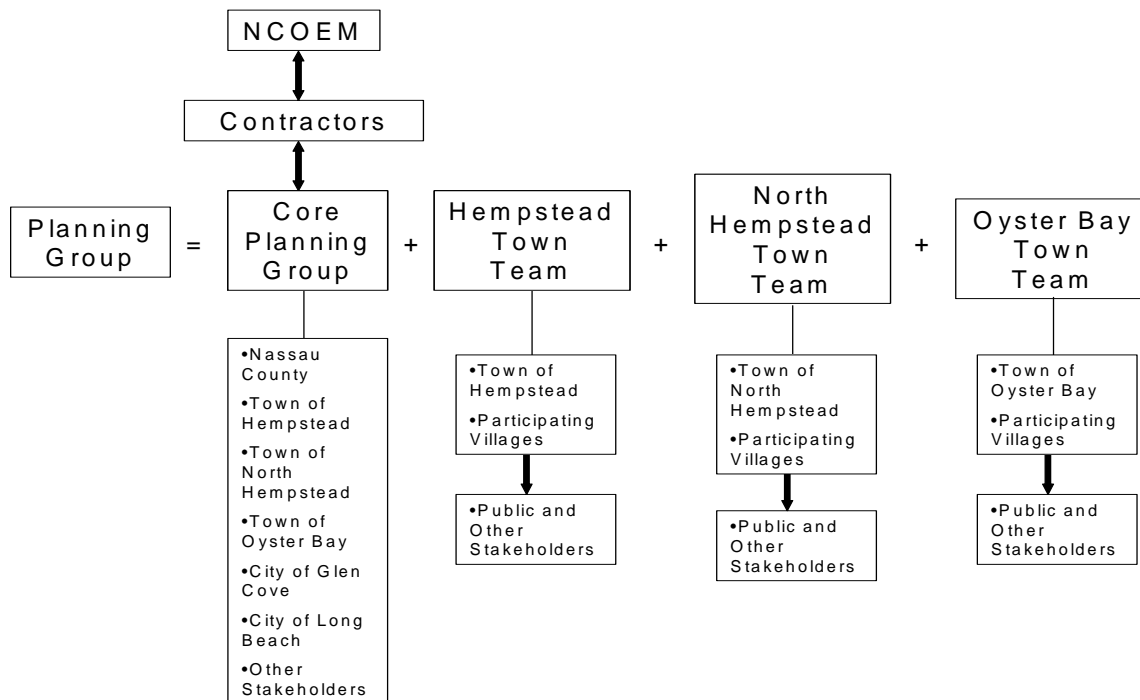
- Village of Freeport has an approved plan in place and will be participating in an advisory capacity.
- Villages of East Rockaway and Valley Stream have single jurisdiction plans under review and will be participating in an advisory capacity.
- Villages of Garden City, Hewlett Harbor, Island Park, Lynbrook, Rockville Centre, Stewart Manor, Baxter Estates, Great Neck Estates, Munsey Park, Port Washington, Sands Point, Centre Island, Lattingtown, Massapequa Park, Oyster Bay Cove, and Sea Cliff will be participating jurisdictions.

The overall **Planning Group** will consist of members from Nassau County, each participating jurisdiction, and other stakeholders. The overall Planning Group will be divided into a **Core Planning Group** and **three Town Teams**. All members of the Core Planning Group and the three Town Teams will also be members of the overall Planning Group.

The **Core Planning Group** will be responsible for day-to-day plan formulation activities and decision making. Town representatives on the Core Planning Group will be responsible for conducting an outreach program for the municipalities and other stakeholders within their respective boundaries through establishing **Town Teams**. Since Nassau County's three towns (Oyster Bay, Hempstead, and North Hempstead) equal the entire footprint of the County, each Town Team will consist of membership from smaller municipalities within its respective town boundaries.

During the planning process, the Planning Group is scheduled to meet twice; the Core Planning Group is scheduled to meet four times; and each of the three Town Teams is scheduled to meet three times, for a total of fifteen meetings. The public and other stakeholders will be invited to Town Team meetings. Because Planning Group and Core Planning Group meetings will generally be working sessions, attendance will be limited to members of the Core Planning Group.

The following flowchart expresses the makeup of the Planning Group in graphic format.



## The Role of the Contractors in the Plan Development Process

The Hazard Mitigation Plan is the County's plan; as such, its success rests on the decisions and directions set by the Planning Group members throughout the plan development process. URS was contracted by Nassau County to work with the County OEM and the Planning Group to assist them in developing a plan that would meet the requirements of DMA 2000. URS will be the prime contractor responsible for providing the Planning Group with hazard mitigation planning support services, while Omni Consulting will be a sub-consultant to URS providing outreach support.

URS will assist the Planning Group by conducting the analyses necessary to provide the Planning Group with the information they need to make sound decisions, and help guide them through the necessary steps of the plan development process. The Planning Group, in turn, will take the lead by including the local community and other stakeholders, assessing the alternatives, and ultimately selecting the course of action to be followed. At the end of the planning process, URS will prepare the Plan text (with feedback from the Planning Group) to document the Group's efforts, along with hazard information and findings, in a manner consistent with applicable regulations (DMA 2000), criteria (44 CFR Part 201.6), and guidance (FEMA's Mitigation Planning "How-To" guides; FEMA's Multi-Hazard Mitigation Planning Guidance document of March 2004).

## *Section 2 – Part A*

### *Outreach Plan: Plan Development Process*

*Inviting the Public and Other Stakeholders to Participate in the Plan Development Process*

#### Overview

The outreach effort seeks to gather pertinent information from residents and officials and to disseminate information about the plan as it progresses. The outreach program will:

1. Identify important stakeholders and provide them with an opportunity to be involved in the planning process.
2. Be structured in such a way as to maximize public participation in the planning process.
  - **Overall Planning Group** composed of officials from Nassau County, each participating jurisdiction, and other stakeholders. The members of the Core Planning Group and the three Town Teams will also be members of the overall Planning Group.
  - **Core Planning Group** responsible for day-to-day plan formulation activities and decision making.
  - **Town Teams**
    - Town representatives on the Core Planning Group will conduct an outreach program for the municipalities and other stakeholders within their respective boundaries through the town teams.
    - Each Town Team will have members from the smaller municipalities within its respective town boundaries.
3. Provide opportunities for communication between the planners and the public.
  - **Invitations** to the public to attend meetings of the Planning Group and each of the three Town Teams.
  - **Meetings** with community groups and civic associations.
  - A **website** that will describe and update the planning process and provide links to relevant documents.
  - **Document repositories** located in each of the three towns to enable the public to access hard copies of documents.
  - **Mailings** to elected officials, interested residents, and stakeholders updating them on the plan and inviting their comments and responses.
  - **Posters and flyers** for additional meeting announcements.
4. Involve both print and broadcast media in the dissemination of information.
  - **Press advisories** and **press releases** to inform reporters and editors of meetings and of the publication of plan documents.
  - **Interviews** with television personalities via cable access television and radio station interviews.
5. Provide points of contact for the public and the press.

## Public Involvement in the Plan Development Process

The Regulations: 44 CFR Part 201.6 (b)(1) states, "*In order to develop a more comprehensive approach to reducing the effects of natural disasters, the planning process shall include....an opportunity for the public to comment on the plan during the drafting stage and prior to plan approval.*"

The role of public involvement in the plan development process is to provide the general public with the means not only to learn about the process that the Planning Group is undertaking, but also to voice concerns and to provide input throughout the planning process. With support and guidance from URS, the Planning Group Chairman will take the lead in: (a) alerting the public to the fact that the Planning Group is working to develop this Hazard Mitigation Plan, and (b) providing the public with a forum to ask questions, and submit comments and suggestions on the process. The Planning Group Chairman will be supported in this effort by the Town Teams, which will also undertake additional public outreach activities within their respective jurisdictions.

The **Planning Group Chairman** will:

- Alert the public to the fact that the Planning Group is working to develop this Hazard Mitigation Plan
- Establish a NC-OEM Mitigation Planning web site to provide information on the planning process, meeting minutes and other activities.
- Establish document repositories in libraries throughout the County containing the contents of the web site, for those who may not have internet access.
- Answer questions, receive comments and provide feedback.

The **Planning Group members** may undertake the following actions to raise public awareness of the plan development process and provide the public with a forum for providing feedback to the overall Planning Group:

- Answer questions and incorporate suggestions as applicable throughout the process.
- Invite the public to attend meetings of each of the three Town Teams.
- Invite the public to review and provide comments on the Draft Plan.
- Establish a link on their jurisdiction's web site to the NC-OEM web site (to provide information on the planning process, meeting minutes, etc.)
- Notify the general public using radio announcements, press advisories/releases, interviews with television personalities via cable access television, web site postings, posters and flyers publicizing the meetings, document repositories, and letters to elected officials and interested residents.
- For all of the items above, interested parties will be directed to the Planning Group Chairman to ask questions, submit comments, and provide feedback.

While DMA 2000 requires that the team reach out to invite public participation, the team will not be penalized if the public chooses not to participate.

## Involvement of Other Stakeholders in the Plan Development Process

The Regulations: 44 CFR Part 201.6 (b)(2) states, *"In order to develop a more comprehensive approach to reducing the effects of natural disasters, the planning process shall include...an opportunity for neighboring communities, local and regional agencies involved in hazard mitigation activities, and agencies that have the authority to regulate development, as well as businesses, academia and other private and non-profit interests to be involved in the planning process."*

To meet Federal requirements, "other stakeholders" (that is, stakeholders beyond Planning Group members and the general public) must be able to learn about the process that the Planning Group is undertaking and to voice concerns and provide input throughout the planning process.

Planning Group members will have key roles in pursuing a range of activities to: (a) alert other stakeholders to the fact that the Planning Group is working to develop this Hazard Mitigation Plan, and (b) provide other stakeholders with a forum to ask questions and submit comments and suggestions on the process.

Other stakeholders that could be considered are:

- Neighborhood groups
- Non-profit organizations (i.e. scout troops, Red Cross, Salvation Army)
- Housing organizations
- Environmental groups
- Historic preservation groups
- Parent-teacher organizations
- Church organizations
- State, federal, and local government offices
- Neighboring communities/counties
- Business and development organizations
- Academic institutions
- Utility providers
- Large businesses
- Hospitals
- Tribal groups
- Transportation entities (ie. LIRR)
- Parks organizations
- Regional planning organizations
- Emergency service providers (ie., police, fire, EMS (Nassau Regional EMS Council))
- Member Nassau County IT group (re: web link for mitigation planning effort)
- Any local office and/or group with a public outreach focus

As recommended in the FEMA How-To Guide #386-1, even if these groups decline to participate early on, they may be reached out to in later stages of the process for participation, information, or advice. Keeping stakeholders copied on meeting notices and providing copies of meeting minutes (even via email) is a good way to invite participation and encourage coordination. The level of participation received from stakeholders can range from no participation through advisory to active participant. While DMA 2000 requires that the team reach out to invite stakeholder participation; the team will not be penalized if other stakeholders choose not to participate.

The Planning Group may undertake the following actions to raise stakeholder awareness of the plan development process and provide other stakeholders with a forum for providing feedback to the Planning Group:

- Along with the general public, other stakeholders will be invited to attend meetings of each of the three Town Teams.
- Along with the general public, other stakeholders will be invited to review and provide comments on the Draft Plan.
- Other stakeholders that the Planning Group would like to solicit particular feedback from will be targeted for outreach, at the discretion of the Planning Group.
- A NC-OEM Mitigation Planning web site will be established to provide information on the planning process, meeting minutes, etc. Document repositories will be established in libraries throughout the County containing the contents of the web site, for those who may not have internet access.
- Participating jurisdictions could provide links on their respective web site to the NC-OEM Mitigation Planning web page.
- For all of the items above, interested parties will be directed to the Planning Group Chairman to ask questions, submit comments, or provide feedback. The Planning Group will incorporate these suggestions throughout the process to the best of their abilities.

Some methods of notification that the Planning Group members may choose to employ to notify other stakeholders may include, but are not limited to: radio announcements, press advisories/releases, interviews with television personalities via cable access television, web site postings, posters and flyers publicizing the meetings, document repositories, and targeted outreach to specific stakeholders identified by Planning Group members (via email, phone, fax, or letter).

Targeted outreach can be as simple as a one page letter sent to a list of a few key stakeholders in the County from a range of areas (for example: county-wide, neighborhood, EMS, hospital, business, and development organizations; neighboring counties). The letter could:

- Alert the stakeholders to the planning process that is being undertaken;
- Provide them with a link to the upcoming County web site for more information on the process;
- Identify the Planning Group Chairman's contact information if they have detailed questions;
- Offer to send them copies of meeting minutes and a notification when the Draft is released, if they respond requesting such.

## Participation Criteria

Draft Participation Criteria were developed in September 2005 to identify what is expected of each participating jurisdiction throughout the plan development process. These criteria will be discussed and finalized at the first meeting of the Planning Group on October 20, 2005. At this time, the following criteria regarding outreach to the public and other stakeholders must be met by each participating jurisdiction:

- **Criteria #6:** [Nassau County and Each Participating Jurisdiction Use suggestions presented in the Outreach Plan to provide at least one opportunity for involvement for: neighboring jurisdictions; local and regional agencies involved in hazard mitigation activities; agencies that have the authority to regulate development; businesses; academia and other private and non-profit interests. As required, provide at least one method of outreach that will reach the full realm. Supplement with targeted outreach to key entities. Fill out the Outreach Log to summarize activities conducted and return for URS inclusion in the Plan.



- **Criteria #7:** [Nassau County Only]: Notify Suffolk County, Queens and Bronx Counties, and any non-participating jurisdictions within Nassau County of the planning process and invite questions/comments/feedback. [Fill out the Outreach Log to summarize activities conducted and return for URS inclusion in the Plan.]

The Draft Plan is scheduled for completion in early February 2006. In order for the activities of participating jurisdictions to be incorporated, Outreach Logs documenting outreach to the public and other stakeholders must be provided to URS no later than January 15, 2006.

## *Section 2 – Part B*

### *Outreach Plan: Plan Maintenance Process*

#### *Inviting the Public and Other Stakeholders to Participate in the Plan Maintenance Process*

The Regulations: 44 CFR Part 201.6(c)(4)(iii) states, “[The plan maintenance process shall include a] discussion on how the community will continue public participation in the plan maintenance process.”

To meet this requirement, the new Hazard Mitigation Plan should describe what opportunities the public and other stakeholders will have during the plan’s periodic review to comment on the progress made to date and on any proposed plan revisions.

Note that this is a separate issue from the public’s participation to-date in plan *development*. The plan must also discuss specific procedures for how the Planning Group will invite the public to participate in *future* plan monitoring, evaluating, and updating. Will the Planning Group send an annual newsletter out to the public, with a survey form to fill out? Will the Planning Group hold annual public meetings to discuss the status of the plan recommendations? What process will be in place for public comments to be incorporated into future plan updates?

The following pages provide action item suggestions that the Planning Group could consider for selection as opportunities for continued participation on the part of the public and other stakeholders. The Planning Group members should select items that they feel are most appropriate and provide feedback to URS on what was selected as a final course of action to be incorporated into the plan.

### **Continued Public Involvement in Plan Maintenance**

URS recommends that the Planning Group pursue a wide array of activities to involve the public during future plan monitoring, evaluating, and updates. Options include but are not limited to:

- **Share the findings of future progress reports** with interested groups, elected officials, neighborhood representatives and citizens as one way to keep the parties informed and involved. This could be done by posting progress reports in local libraries, clerk’s offices, web sites, etc. Furthermore, this keeps those responsible for implementing the mitigation actions motivated.
- **Conduct town hall meetings**, which are an effective way to bring citizens and Planning Group members together to learn about the progress being made on the plan;

- Provide **facilitated meetings**. An experienced facilitator would assist with the process of obtaining public opinions, suggestions and other pertinent information relevant to the goals and objectives of the plan.
- Provide the public with **surveys** that assess how well the public education and outreach projects are working and how the community perceives the planning efforts. Samples are included in the FEMA How-To's. Questionnaires/surveys are excellent tools to assist the Planning Group in obtaining valuable feedback on the plan. By their nature, questionnaires also provide recipients with an excellent vehicle to provide comments.  
Once the Planning Group has gathered the feedback from the general public and local community, URS suggests organizing the data by topic, by types of responses and suggestions or by Planning Group members' related tasks in the plan. This will facilitate the process of incorporating the feedback into the plan.  
One method of organizing the data is to build a database that would contain community member/general public responses to the plan and the surveys. This data could then be used to conduct statistical analyses by topic (such as land use or environment); calculate total numbers in support of or against policies of the mitigation process; and gather suggestions and comments regarding the natural hazards, among other concerns that may arise out of the public's awareness.
- Offer **working groups** or advisory groups by topic areas such as land use, environmental protection and transportation;
- Conduct planned or impromptu **interviews** with community members and publicize their comments;
- Use the **media** to inform the public of the plan, through press releases, handing out flyers, newsletters or placing local ads on TV, and in newspapers and magazines;
- Offer **telephone hotline services** (preferably a toll-free number).
- Establish an **online presence** with a Web site or the use of an existing Web site of the participating jurisdiction members. The easy accessibility to a Web site that the public can access at any time to read about the latest natural hazards or obtain the latest hazard mitigation planning information is an excellent method of keeping the public involved and informed on a continuous basis. For instance, the Planning Group could provide a section where the community can fill-out questionnaires as well as email Planning Group members with issues or success stories. Additionally, by offering online services, the general public could:
  - participate in message boards on the site (open to all for comments on specific mitigation topics);
  - review meeting minutes and notes;
  - review the Plan itself;
  - follow links to natural hazards information;
  - fill out online surveys and questionnaires;
  - obtain contact information for key persons involved in the mitigation planning process; and
  - vote on various mitigation-related issues, questions, processes, goals, objectives, etc.

Opportunities selected by the Planning Group for public participation in plan maintenance should be very specific in terms of: exactly *when* these opportunities will be available; *how* the public will be notified of their opportunity to participate; where the plan and any progress reports, meeting minutes, etc. will be maintained for review, how and to whom comments can be submitted.

Statements "that" certain things will happen are not sufficient in themselves to meet FEMA criteria. Details must be provided to show that a process has been clearly thought out and identified. For example, stating "that the public will be invited to participate in future plan monitoring, evaluation, and updates" is not

sufficient. Additional information should be included so that the reader knows how and when members of the public will be invited to participate; what they will be invited to do (i.e., an annual meeting? A questionnaire or survey?); how and when they will be notified of this opportunity; how they can submit comments; what will be done with their comments. In our opinion, it would be more important to have a few, well thought out options defined in detail than a multitude of options defined only in part. If participating jurisdictions have public outreach persons on staff, it may be a good idea for the Planning Group to consider soliciting their support.

The Draft Plan is scheduled for completion in early February 2006. To allow URS sufficient time to draft appropriate plan sections, the Planning Group must provide their selected approach for public and other stakeholder participation in plan maintenance no later than January 15, 2006.

## Key Points and an Example

The Planning Group should take into account that the information they will provide to URS regarding public participation in plan maintenance will answer the following question according to FEMA's requirements:

- **Does the approach explain how continued public participation will be obtained?** (e.g., public notices, an ongoing mitigation plan Planning Group, annual review meetings with stakeholders and others mentioned above)

Opportunities for continued community involvement beyond the plan approval stage and into the plan maintenance cycle (future monitoring, evaluating, and update steps that will be undertaken in the years to come) are required for the plan to meet FEMA requirements. These also promote the development of an informed citizenry who are knowledgeable about their vulnerabilities to natural hazards and the options for reducing their losses.

The text below is a sample of acceptable text for plan monitoring, evaluating, and updating, as printed in FEMA's "Multi-Hazard Mitigation Planning Guidance Under The Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000," Part 3 – Local Mitigation Plans, Page 3-50:

*"Rocky County is dedicated to involving the public directly in the continual reshaping and updating of the Hazard Mitigation Plan. The Hazard Mitigation Plan Evaluation Planning Group members are responsible for the annual review and update of the plan. Although they represent the public to some extent, the public will be able to directly comment on and provide feedback about the plan.*

*Copies of the plan will be catalogued and kept on hand at all of the public libraries in the County. The existence and location of these copies will be publicized in the monthly newsletter sent out by the County Chamber of Commerce. Contained in the plan is the address and phone number of County Planning Department Staff Member(s) responsible for keeping track of public comments on the plan.*

*In addition, copies of the plan and any proposed changes will be posted on the County Government website. This site will also contain an email address and phone number to which people can direct their comments or concerns. A link to this site will also be provided on the local Sandy State College Department of Geography and Department of Urban Planning web pages.*

*A public meeting will also be held after each annual Mitigation Plan Evaluation Planning Group meeting. This meeting will provide the public a forum for which they can express its concerns, opinions, or ideas about the plan. The County Planning Department will publicize and host this meeting."*

Keep in mind, however, that since this was first published, FEMA has gotten more particular in evaluating plans as they have come to better understand what the IFR is requiring. In this case, the more detailed, the better.



NASSAU COUNTY  
MULTI-JURISDICTIONAL  
HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN  
OUTREACH LOG

PARTICIPATING JURIDICTION: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE OF ACTIVITY	TYPE OF ACTIVITY	ACTIVITY DETAILS	LEAD DEPARTMENT AND/OR STAFF TITLE WHO UNDERTOOK ACTIVITY

Please add additional pages as-needed....

